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AFS

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET				
SUBJECT: (Optional) Monthly Report -- Abidjan Bureau				
FROM: Chief, Operations Group		EXTENSION 3-5991	NO. DATE October 1987	
TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		
1. C/MOD				
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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
ABIDJAN BUREAU

FBIS 2600-87
1 November 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THRU: Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT: Monthly Report--Abidjan Bureau--October 1987

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. Bureau coverage in October was dominated by a coup in Burkina Faso in which popular and charismatic leader Thomas Sankara was killed and replaced by his longtime associate Blaise Compaore. The bureau monitored the initial announcement at 1816 gmt from Ouagadougou Domestic Service in French and filed a flash fyi which cleared the bureau four minutes later. It was the first of almost 200 items filed during the month on this story which has several interesting twists and which drew wide reaction from Burkina's neighboring countries.

According to Compaore, Sankara had become increasingly autocratic in his decisionmaking and had decided to arrest and execute several high-ranking associates on the 15th. Learning of this plot, Compaore's 5th Military Region troops supposedly moved without his orders against Sankara. In the fighting that ensued, Sankara and several of his bodyguards were killed. Compaore later said that events had gotten out of hand, that there was no original intention to kill Sankara and that he "had been overwhelmed with grief" by the death of his former friend. Compaore has now become head of state, head of government and chairman of the new ruling Popular Front. His key associates in the coup, Capt Henri Zongo and Maj Jean-Baptiste Lingani have become ministers of economic promotion and defense respectively. There has been no clear indication of new policy directions so far. Compaore speaks in vague terms of a "rectification" process to get the revolution back on track.

Opposition to the coup so far has centered around the commander of the 3d Military Region, the colorful "Lion of Bulkiemde", Capt Boukary Kabore. Ouagadougou derisively suggested he might be more lamb than lion when his opposition folded without serious fighting on October 27 as troops loyal to Compaore moved into the area. He is currently rumored to have fled to Ghana. Ouagadougou also reported that the commander of the 2d Military Region had blocked a motion of support for the new regime, since rectified, and there have been some isolated instances of students expressing pro-Sankara sentiments but at the moment there is no open opposition being reported.

-2-

Burkina's neighbors have been split in their reaction to the coup. Togo and Ivory Coast for example have pledged to work with the new regime while Ghana continues to extoll Sankara (thought to be a personal friend of head of state Rawlings) and broadcast "eyewitness" accounts of Sankara's murder that differ markedly from Compaore's version. Congo has also been critical with the Youth Union, believed to include top Congolese officials, calling for Burkina youth to reject Compaore.

To cover the coup, the bureau remained open late several times, once throughout the night, and had an open speaker watch both on Ouagadougou Domestic Service and on Bobo-Dioulasso radio broadcast from the second largest town in Burkina Faso.

2. In Liberia charges and counter charges of spying were reported in the wake of Bob Woodward's new book on the CIA which reportedly implicates the agency in a 1985 assassination attempt against Liberian leader, Liberia subsequently tightened control of contacts with foreign diplomats and President Doe stated publicly that he wasn't about to take orders from the CIA or KGB. In one of the few official comments on the issue, the Liberian Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism on 9 October called on the United States to come out with a "convincing statement" on this issue. It said "Liberia cannot afford the double faced and hypocritical role being played by their historic friend," but there has been little other official comment monitored. Meanwhile, President Doe has used the occasion to claim that some of the bishops and religious leaders who oppose his policy are spies and the opposition has in turn accused the Liberian ambassador to the United States of being a spy.

3. Other noteworthy events during the month included a rumored assassination attempt against the Mauritanian head of state on October 27, an unsuccessful coup attempt in Mauritania on the 22d, continued Libyan overflights of Chad, and Ghanaian charges that the CSSR and EEC were shipping contaminated powdered milk to them that was radioactive due to the Chernobyl incident.

B. Lateral Services

1. The bureau supplied the Ivory Coast Foreign Ministry with a transcript of the first speech by Blaise Campaore, the new Burkinabe head of state, in which he addressed the nation on the reasons for the coup.

2. The bureau received a message of appreciation from U.S. Embassy Nouakchott for "high quality work." The message states that "FBIS items are always timely and very well translated. We find them quite valuable as we attempt to interpret events in a society where reliable information is often hard to find."

C. Technical

A date-time stamp received this month from Swaziland Bureau was added to the bureau's inventory of non-expendable equipment.

-3-

II. VISITS

1. Ambassador Dennis Kux attended the bureau staff meeting on 26 October. He complimented the staff on coverage of the Burkina Faso coup.

2. Vienna deputy commo supervisor spend one day TDY at the bureau. His discussions with communications and monitorial personnel on automation at Vienna Bureau were particularly interesting and useful.

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3. Newly-assigned USIA Cultural Attache Amelia Broderick toured the bureau and received a short briefing on operations.



STAT

Chief, Abidjan Bureau

Attachments:

Monthly Production Report

cc: Chief, Swaziland Bureau
Deputy Chief, London Bureau